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Raised Bill 5555
Public Hearing: 3-17-14

TO: MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
FROM: CONNECTICUT TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (CTLA)
DATE: MARCH 17, 2014

RE: **OPPOSITION TO HB5555, AAC THE PROVISION OF EMERGENCY
ASSISTANCE TO ANIMALS**

The CTLA strongly opposes the unnecessary expansion of the Good Samaritan statute found in HB5555 An Act Concerning the Provision of Emergency Assistance to Animals. It would immunize people from their own negligence, without anything in the statute to ensure that people trying to help hurt animals do so with at least a minimum of care.

This proposal to afford anyone broad immunity for negligent actions and omissions is problematic in a few different ways.

First, it does not encourage safety and care in the assistance of animals. Situations where people come across animals in danger are ones which the state public policy should be to do everything it can to promote safety, not shield people from responsibility for it. Immunities like this, while offered as a carrot to encourage people to help hurt animals, inevitably will lead to lower safety standards for the very animals they are meant to save.

Second, there is no reason why if people are given broad immunity against their own negligence every time anyone acted in what they perceive to be a helpful way wouldn't ask for the same escape from their negligent acts. Offering assistance to animals should not be looked at as a burden people need to be protected from, they should do everything they can to help, but use ordinary care in doing so, this bill would not encourage that care.

Lastly, anyone abusing an animal could attempt to claim this immunity for their actions. This bill includes no safeguards against intentional bad actors, even the very people who originally harmed the animal escaping justice for the harms they caused.

This proposal sets a bad precedent in Connecticut of seeking to protect the negligence of people at the expense of owners of animals, who were not in the position to effect safety of their pets and may have a legitimate claim against their "Good Samaritan".

WE STRONGLY URGE YOU TO OPPOSE HB5555. Thank you.